

# EXPLANATION OF DATA QUALIFIERS

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For reporting results to the USEPA, the following contract specific qualifiers are to be used. The seven qualifiers defined below are not subject to modification by the laboratory. Up to five qualifiers may be reported on Form I for each compound.

The seven EPA-defined qualifiers to be used are as follows:

**U** - Indicates compound was analyzed for but not detected. The sample quantitation limit must be corrected for dilution and for percent moisture. For example, 10 U for phenol in water if the sample final volume is the protocol-specified final volume. If a 1 to 10 dilution of extract is necessary, the reported limit is 100 U. For a soil sample, the value must also be adjusted for percent moisture. For example, if the sample had 24% moisture and a 1 to 10 dilution factor, the sample quantitation limit for phenol (330 U) would be corrected to:

$$\frac{(330 \text{ U}) \times \text{df}}{D} \quad \text{where } D = \frac{100 - \% \text{ moisture}}{100}$$

and df = dilution factor

$$\text{at } 24\% \text{ moisture, } D = \frac{100 - 24}{100} = 0.76$$

EPA Region 5 Records Ctr.



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$$\frac{(330 \text{ U}) \times 10}{.76} = 4300 \text{ U} \quad \text{rounded to the appropriate number of significant figures}$$

For soil samples subjected to GPC clean-up procedures, the CRQL is also multiplied by 2, to account for the fact that only half of the extract is recovered.

**J** - Indicates an estimated value. This flag is used either when estimating a concentration for tentatively identified compounds where a 1:1 response is assumed, or when the mass spectral data indicate the presence of a compound that meets the identification criteria but the result is less than the sample quantitation limit but greater than zero. For example; if the sample quantitation limit is 10 ug/L, but a concentration of 3 ug/L is calculated, report it as 3J. The sample quantitation limit must be adjusted for both dilution and percent moisture as discussed for the U flag, so that if a sample with 24% moisture and a 1 to 10 dilution factor has a calculated concentration of 300 ug/L and a sample quantitation limit of 430 ug/kg, report the concentration as 300J on Form I.

**C** - This flag applies to pesticide results where the identification has been confirmed by GC/MS. Single component pesticides  $\geq 10$  ng/ul in the final extract shall be confirmed by GC/MS.

- B - This flag is used when the analyte is found in the associated blank as well as in the sample. It indicates possible/probable blank contamination and warns the data user to take appropriate action. This flag must be used for a TIC as well as for a positively identified TCL compound.
- E - This flag identifies compounds whose concentrations exceed the calibration range of the GC/MS instrument for that specific analysis. This flag will not apply to pesticides/PCBs analyzed by GC/EC methods. If one or more compounds have a response greater than full scale, the sample or extract must be diluted and re-analyzed according to the specifications in Exhibit D. All such compounds with a response greater than full scale should have the concentration flagged with an "E" on the Form I for the original analysis. If the dilution of the extract ~~causes any compounds identified in the first analysis to be below the calibration range in the second analysis~~, then the results of both analyses shall be reported on separate Forms I. The Form I for the diluted sample shall have the "DL" suffix appended to the sample number. NOTE: For total xylenes, where three isomers are quantified as two peaks, the calibration range of each peak should be considered separately, e.g., a diluted analysis is not required for total xylenes unless the concentration of either peak separately exceeds 200 ug/L.
- D - This flag identifies all compounds identified in an analysis at a secondary dilution factor. If a sample or extract is re-analyzed at a higher dilution factor, as in the "E" flag above, the "DL" suffix is appended to the sample number on the Form I for the diluted sample, and all concentration values reported on that Form I are flagged with the "D" flag.
- A - This flag indicates that a TIC is a suspected aldol-condensation product.
- X - Other specific flags may be required to properly define the results. If used, they must be fully described and such description attached to the Sample Data Summary Package and Case Narrative. Begin by using "X". If more than one flag is required, use "Y" and "Z", as needed. If more than five qualifiers are required for a sample result, use the "X" flag to combine several flags, as needed. For instance, the "X" flag might combine the "A", "B", and "D" flags for some sample.

The combination of flags "BU" or "UB" is expressly prohibited. Blank contaminants are flagged "B" only when they are also detected in the sample.

If analyses at two different dilution factors are required (see Exhibit D), follow the data reporting instructions given in Exhibit D and with the "D" and "E" flags above.